

November Noise

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Category: IT (2017)

Genre: Anxiety, Hurt/Comfort, M/M, Tattoos, losers in love

Language: English

Characters: Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier

Relationships: Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-08

Updated: 2017-11-08

Packaged: 2020-02-01 13:35:56

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,028

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

The world is silent, cold. Eddie has had nights like this before, where he feels so utterly alone, but he's never been kept awake this long. He can't shake this feeling of isolation, but thinking of all those times that Richie has climbed through his window to keep him company no matter which of them it was that was having a bad night, he decides to do what he never does - slip out his window, and go to Richie's for once instead.

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Author's Note:

- For [killerqueer](#).

Novembers in Derry are seemingly quiet. Families cling even closer, bugs start dying, and after the birds stop chirping, there's essentially nothing left alive.

Just silence. Peaceful, overwhelming, *suffocating* silence.

Eddie wraps his blanket around him tighter, feeling a shiver run through his spine. The world seems so cold, on nights like this, when he feels violently alone.

He usually lets himself suffer. Either sleep will come to him, or better yet, Richie will inevitably climb through his window.

But there's no sign of either coming to him tonight, and now all Eddie can do is squeeze his eyes shut and try not to panic. Try to pinpoint what color the spots on the inside of his eyes are. Hope that staring will make him dizzy enough that he can focus on physical illness instead, because he knows how to categorize that. He doesn't know what to do with panic, he just knows that if he *does*, he'll lose himself, or he'll have an asthma attack and wake his mother, and both sound terrible. Maybe more terrible than sitting here all night, trying to force himself to vomit, as if that will rid him of all his pains.

He's restless, and as the numbers on his clock tick up, he starts to worry. This isn't how it goes, this is *never* how it goes. Why did he feel like he was falling?

There's a moment of hesitation, but once Eddie's made the decision, he's slipping out of his bed with determination. All of his movements are quick, calculated. He knows what he'll need and what he won't as he fills his backpack, and he doesn't stop to think about what might happen if he isn't back before his mom comes to wake him up.

He opens the window, and immediately brisk air fills up the room.

That's where the hesitation comes, seeping in with the autumn chill, but he can't stay. Not like this. Not when he can't breathe and can't think, and especially not when he knows that all the medicine in the world won't help him.

He steps lightly onto the roof, unfamiliar with the footing. It's been years since he's had to do this, but it comes back to him quickly. He pulls the strings on his jacket tighter, tries to tug his collar closer to his neck, and grabs his bike.

He wishes he had a car, but he had felt like he didn't need one. Richie was his ride to, well, everywhere. They never went out by themselves, so why get another car if they were just going to carpool anyway?

But Richie wasn't his ride, not right now. So Eddie sucks it up, forgets the fact that he can hardly feel his legs, and pedals.

The air stings against his cheeks, flushed and bright against the dark sky. As soon as he's there, he drops his bike in the grass, doesn't bother to hide it by the side of the house.

Richie's house.

Eddie climbs quickly, and doesn't even knock. Richie barely remembers that he needs to lock the front door, let alone his windows. Eddie throws the glass open before squeezing through, stumbling over his own legs and taking a moment to just stare at the carpet beneath his knees while he catches his breath.

There's almost no noise, not even a soft wind from outside. Just Eddie's shallow breathing.

Richie, only covered by a sheet haphazardly thrown on top of him, is already halfway sliding off the mattress. He's quick to wake to the cold, and just as quick to recognize that something is very, *very* wrong.

"Geez, Eds, where's the fire?"

He doesn't get a response.

Richie may have never been able to break the habit, even into their late teenage years, sneaking over to Eddie's house almost daily and slipping through the window frame that he had by far outgrown. But Eddie. Eddie didn't climb through windows. Not unless Richie was coming to his house to drag him out, taking him by the hand and leading him off towards pointless adventures.

Treasured memories, but pointless nonetheless.

Now Eddie was here, sitting at the foot of his bed, hands trembling just enough to be noticeable. He doesn't seem to even recognize where he is, eyes hollow and distant. Richie jumps the rest of the way off his bed, grabbing the heavier blanket from the floor and wrapping it around Eddie's shoulders. He shuts the window behind them before gently taking Eddie's hand and leading him over to the bed. "Come on, get your ass in bed."

Eddie is compliant, crawling into the bed and scooting over all the way to the wall. He curls up tightly, as if making himself as small as possible, and Richie is having none of it.

"Nuh uh, Eddie boy. You're coming over here, you got it?"

Richie lays next to him and pulls the smaller boy to his chest, wrapping his gangly limbs around him and nuzzling into Eddie's soft brown hair. They lay like that for a while, and emptiness seems to hang in the air around them, until finally (*finally*) Eddie seems to stir. He pulls the blanket tighter, presses his nose closer to Richie's chest, and lets his hands idly trace the few tattoos Richie has been able to afford.

Eddie knows they all have some sort of sentimental meaning, and that's what he longs for.

Meaning.

He mutters this to Richie, who lets him talk. Slow, open, and welcomed. It's such a different way to live, contrasting harshly with every form of love Eddie had grown up with.

Had his mother known he had felt this way, she would have sent him

to three different hospitals, four different therapists. And maybe a therapist would help, had Eddie not already known that his mother would insist she be present, as if she had the legal right. Had Eddie not already known that when his mother didn't get her way, she would politely let it drop - until she came to pick Eddie up from therapy, and interrogated him then and there while he was trapped in the passenger seat of her car. Sonia Kaspbrak loved her son, loved him dearly, and Eddie knew this too. But love didn't excuse her actions, didn't make it hurt any less, didn't fix this anxious hell that fell upon him when he was isolated in his room at night. He felt so guilty, when he thought of it. He felt guilty for resenting her, when she had only wanted what was best for him. Yet he felt equally guilty when he loved her back, ashamed of feeling so trapped in familial bonds.

But Richie was different.

Richie was vibrant and wild and wicked. Richie never held himself back. Richie was exuberant, lavishly abundant in affection and noise, incorrigible to the point of fond exasperation. Richie, who only wore one pair of shoes, tattered and full of holes. Richie, whose socks never matched, whose grin was always crooked. Richie, who was always there to hold Eddie in his arms, no matter the time.

He was different. And he was perfect.

Eddie unburied himself, just enough to look up at Richie, and was surprised to find Richie staring at him in return, the corners of his mouth turned up into a smile.

"Watcha thinkin' about, Eddie Spaghetti?"

"How many times do I have to tell you to stop calling me that?"

"A thousand. And then another thousand after that. I'd start now, if I were you, Eddie Spaghetti." Eddie laughs softly, and Richie's heart swells as the vibrations thrum through his chest. "Come on, Eds. What's up?"

"Sometimes..." a deep breath, "sometimes you're the only person that makes me feel important, Rich."

Richie presses an uncountable number of kiss across Eddie's face, and they smile at each other. It's not perfect, the anxiety hasn't been fixed, but it's... *right*. It's soft, the moonlight pale, the cold of the outside world forgotten. They press their foreheads together, whispering through the night in between comfortable lapses of silence.

When the sun starts rising through the window, and Richie's eyes are dark from exhaustion, Eddie asks if they can stay home from school. He doesn't even care about his mom, not right now. He's back to tracing the lines on Richie's arms, wishing he had that same kind of meaning. Something to remind him of all the important parts of his life. And then Richie is up from his bed, digging around in his desk drawer for a marker, exclaiming when he finds it.

Eddie watches in awe as Richie draws little pictures on his wrists, willing himself to forget that nagging tone that's telling him about *ink poisoning*, instead laughing as he starts to recognize what Richie is drawing on him.

A bird for Stan. A pencil for Bill. A book for Mike. A feather for Ben. A boot for Bev.

"What about you?"

"You already got me, Eds. Right here, in all the ink."

Eddie playfully shoves him in the chest, pretending to be furious. "At least sign it, Richie." He huffs when Richie rolls his eyes, holding out his extended arm expectantly. Richie does sign it, eventually, printing his name across the contour of Eddie's forearm. They're still all smiles, until Eddie can't stop yawning, and Eddie can't even yell at Richie for making fun of him when he's literally yawning too much to talk. And finally, they go to sleep, warm in each other's embrace.



Eddie leaves Richie's house around noon. He tells Richie that he has to be home around his usual time, but he has a few things he wants to do first. Richie squeezes his hand tightly, and promises he'll come

by later that night.

When he does finally arrive home, Eddie's mom is, needless to say, furious. And Eddie doesn't even care.



As promised, Richie shows up later that night, swooping in through the window feet first. He immediately crawls into bed with Eddie, but then he sees the bandages, and suddenly he's hyper aware of how every movement he makes could be causing Eddie pain.

"What happened? Did your mom freak out about the drawings? Are you actually dying of ink poisoning? Tell me you're not dying, Eds, tell me!" Eddie shoves a hand over his mouth, violently shushing him. "You're gonna wake my mom, jackass! Be quiet and I'll tell you already!"

Richie nods against his hand, but Eddie can tell he's still got a thousand things to say, so he just holds out his arm and nods in its direction until Richie picks up that Eddie wants *him* to unwrap it.

And Richie cries.

There, exactly where Richie had written it, is his own name. Except where as the other little drawings are all faded, no doubt from Eddie thoroughly washing himself, his name is still strongly black. Even stronger, actually. Darker. It's surrounded by a red haze, and Richie's sure he needs new glasses, because he's gotta be seeing something wrong here.

"You really did this? Today?" Eddie nods, hesitant. "You didn't have to go and ruin your pretty skin with my name, Eds."

Eddie shoves him again, this time with his shoulder. "I wanted to, you giant dork. I wanted to have something that would remind me of why I matter." *And that's you.* It didn't need to be said, but Richie could still hear it, and Eddie swears he never saw Richie smile so fucking big in all his life.



Richie may or may not ask Eddie later if he could maybe, possible, *perhaps* get Eddie's name as well. Eddie rolls his eyes, but he's smiling, overwhelming fond of this boy with the untamed hair and a ridiculous amount of freckles. He takes a pen, takes Richie's arm, and signs right beneath the underside of Richie's elbow.

Richie is smiling so wide that he doesn't even look at what Eddie wrote, too caught up in staring at those hazel eyes that are looking up at him through thick lashes.

(He almost cries again when he finally looks down and sees, in small slanted letters, *Eds.*)

Author's Note:

Thank you so much for reading! This is the first finished fic I've done since Until Dawn, and boy, did I miss writing. These two losers are just so in love it hurts.

Every comment is appreciated! Come say hi at donvex.tumblr.com or leave me a tip at ko-fi.com/monstrumian ! I'm always taking prompts, so give me some suggestions of what else I can write for you. ♥